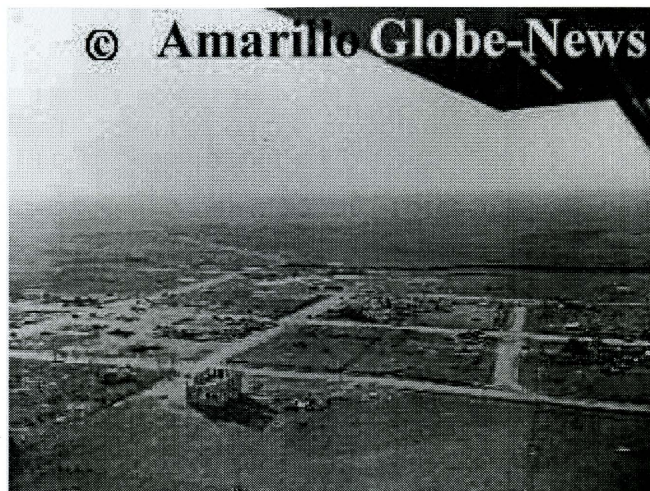


Descriptions of the Top Ten US Killer Tornadoes--#6

#6: The Woodward Tornado



COUNTIES: GRAY / ROBERTS / HEMPHILL / LIPSCOMB, TX / ELLIS / WOODWARD / WOODS, OK / BARBER / KINGMAN, KS--

What is now considered as clearly a family of tornadoes moved northeast and north-northeast from northwest of Pampa to near St. Leo, Kansas. After the White Deer Tornado turned to the north and dissipated, this event formed 5 miles northwest of Pampa and cut a historic path of destruction across three states. The funnel passed northwest of Canadian. Along much of its path in Texas and Oklahoma, it was reported to have been from one to two miles wide. The entire town of Glazier, and much of Higgins were destroyed. The generally accepted death totals are 17 at Glazier and 51 at Higgins. Injury totals were 40 and 232, respectively. According to dubious national press reports, two people reportedly together at Glazier were found three miles apart. The property damage in Texas was \$1,500,000. Passing into Ellis County, Oklahoma, the tornado killed six more people as it passed near Shattuck, Arnett, Gage and Fargo, destroying dozens of farms and ranches. Ellis County losses were put at \$1,264,000. At Woodward, the tornado killed at least 107 people, mostly in the northern half of town, where about 1,000 people were injured, over 100 city blocks were devastated, and over 1000 homes were damaged or destroyed. The damage was two miles wide and losses totaled over \$6,000,000. Cleanup at Woodward was made even more miserable by cold and even snow. The rain immediately after the tornado did suppress fires. Moving into Woods County, the tornado began turning to the north-northeast, passing west of Alva. Due west of Alva, at White Horse, 30 people were injured as 36 homes were destroyed. The official death toll at Woodward is 95, but historical research by Dr. Donald Burgess, of the National Severe Storms Laboratory, clearly shows that the 95 total is too low. His total of 107 is used here. In Barber County, Kansas, the storm passed just west of Hardtner and continued to the north-northeast. West of Medicine Lodge, and as far to the north as St. Leo, no single damage track is in evidence. F1 and F2 damage is scattered in a zone about 10 miles wide through "Gerlane," Pixley, Hazelton, Sharon, Zenda, Nashville and several other small communities. Paper debris from Woodward, and from homes north of Arnett, fell "in quantity" in southwest Barber County, about 15 miles west of this damage area. Kansas losses were \$200,000. Most of the Kansas damage may be downburst-related. The path in Oklahoma may have been made up of five or more distinct tornadoes.